13. Appendix A Computer Terms

Buttons, Push

Buttons are rectangles on your screen that have the names of computer actions on them; e.g. Cancel Exit, etc. Using buttons on a screen is like selecting an icon—you click on it (sometimes called "pushing the button"). This means you position the pointer on the button you want to "push" and then press and release the left mouse button one time.

Central Processing Unit (CPU)

That part of the computer that controls its overall activity; i.e., your computer's "brain." See Computer.

Check Box

A way to visibly tell that an item in a list has been selected. When not selected, it is a small, empty square. When selected, it is a square with a check mark or an X in it.
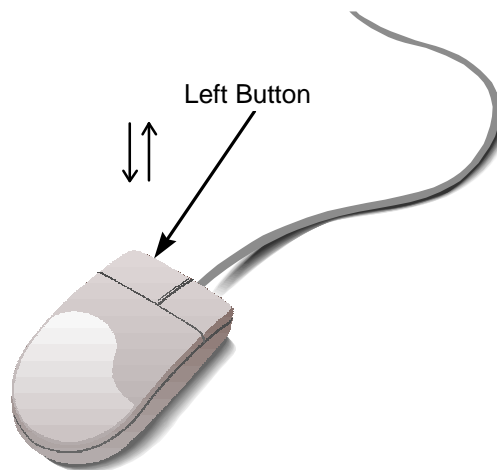
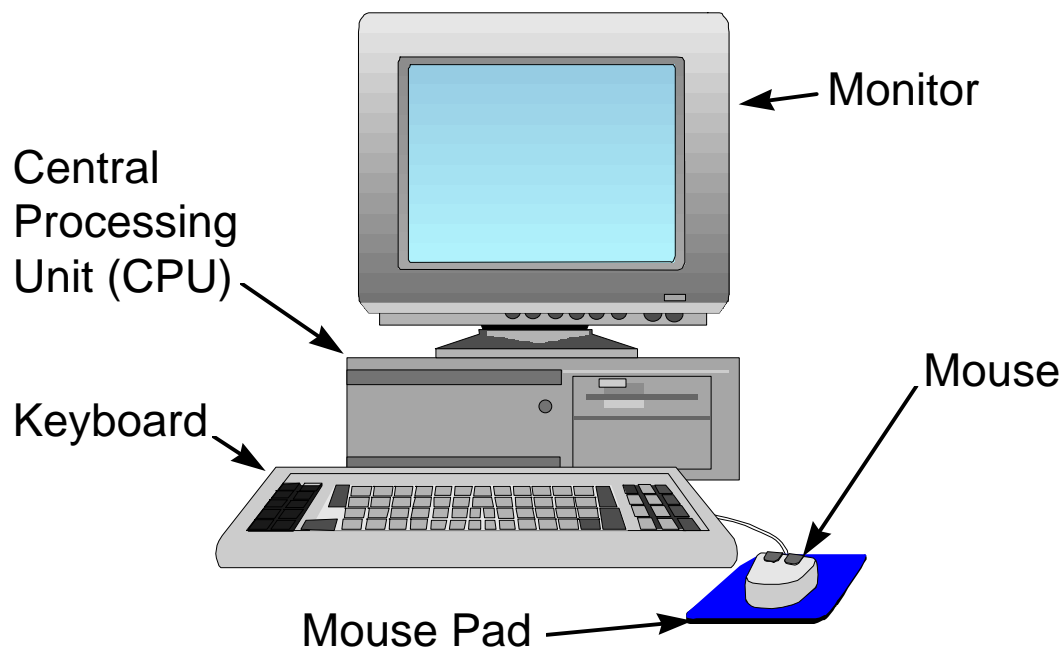Check Box (not selected)   Check Box (selected)

Click

Press and release the mouse button one time. If the instructions say to click on something, use your mouse to position the pointer (cursor on whatever it is that you are supposed to click and then press and release the left mouse button one time.

Left Button

Close

Shut something down or turn it off. When you close a window or screen, it disappears from your monitor. When you close (or exit) your Metrics application, all Metrics screens and windows disappear. Your computer returns to where it was before you opened the application.

Computer

Central
Processing
Unit (CPU)

Monitor

Mouse

Keyboard

Mouse Pad

Cursor

A movable indicator shape on a computer monitor screen. There are different kinds of cursors with different shapes and functions. Two cursors you will use in the Metrics application are the vertical bar and the slanted arrow. The vertical bar shows you where whatever you type will appear. The slanted arrow is sometimes called a mouse pointer or simply a pointer. You use it to select objects.
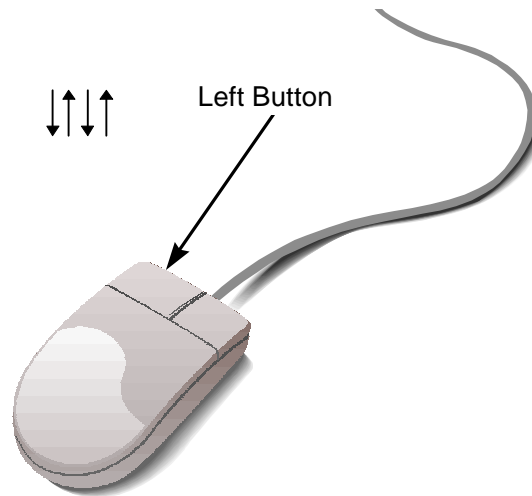
Database

A collection of information in a computer, organized so that it can be expanded, updated and retrieved rapidly. When you type in information in the Metrics application, it is saved in the Metrics database.

Data Field

A function of information that will be stored in a database. On the Metrics screens, you will often be asked to enter information in data boxes. The information that you type in or select to go in these boxes are stored in a corresponding data field in the Metrics database.

Double Click

Press and release the left mouse button two times in rapid succession. If you do not double click fast enough or if you move your mouse between clicks, you have clicked two times which does not have the same effect as a double click.
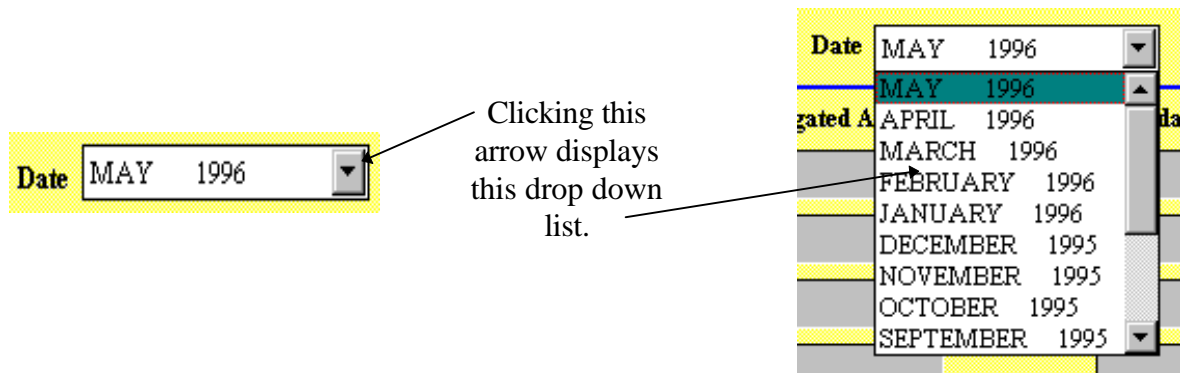
Left Button

Down Arrow

On scroll bars and drop-down lists, used to display additional space/information. Down arrows are located at the bottom of a vertical scroll bar or on the right side of a data box that has an associated drop-down list. When located on a scroll bar, the down arrow is used to view below the current position on the screen or window. When on a data box, it is used to display the drop-down list (by clicking on it). It looks like a triangle. See Scroll Bar and Drop-Down List.

Drop-Down List

Method of presenting choices. When you click on the down arrow on the right side of a data box that has an associated drop-down list, a list opens.

Clicking this arrow displays this drop down list.

Exit

See Close.

Highlight

Change in appearance, often a color change. When you select certain items on your screen, your computer acknowledges that selection by altering the appearance of your selected item. This lets you know that your selection has been duly noted.
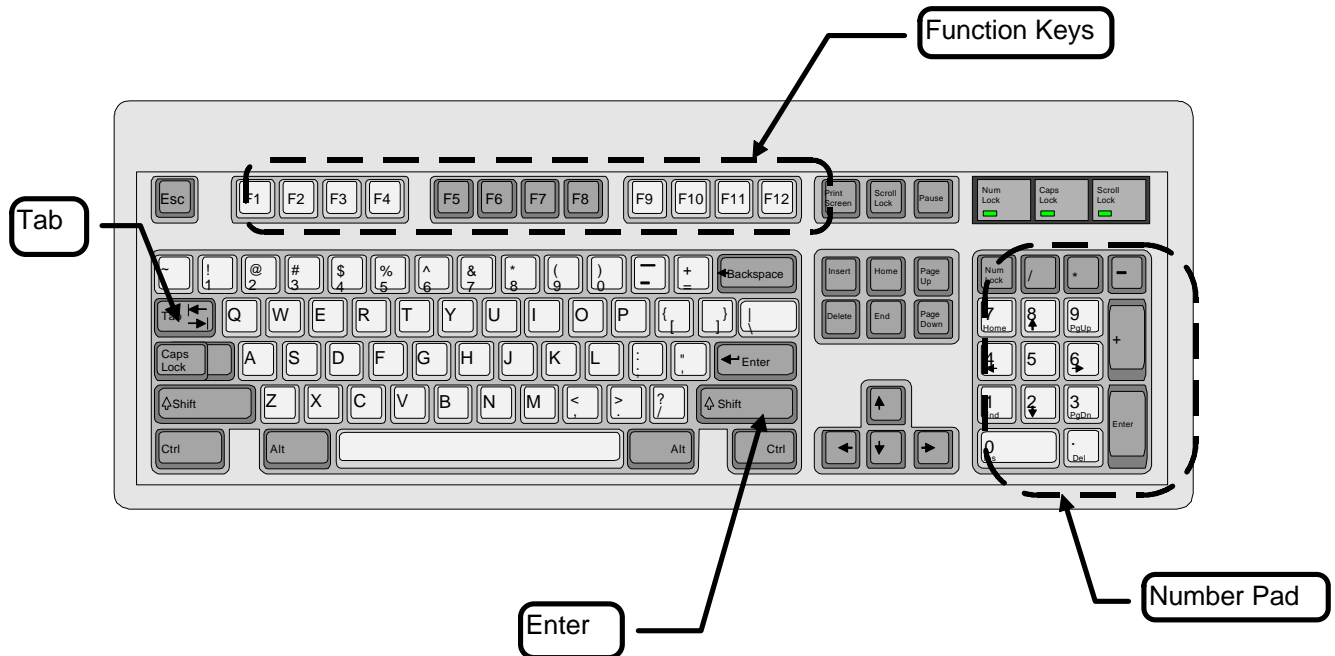
Icon

Picture that represents an available function or resource. For example, the disk shown below is the "save" icon in many computer applications, including Metrics. Clicking on it allows you save your work.

Keyboard

A computer keyboard is a typewriter keyboard plus a whole lot more. You use it like a typewriter to enter information into the Metrics database. You can also use its number pad to enter numeric values. At the top of the keyboard is a row of function keys (e.g., F1, F2, etc.) The F1 key can be pressed to open the Metrics Help Facility from most Metric screens. Also important for entering information and/or moving the cursor are the Enter and Tab keys.

Keyboard-Cont'd

Left Arrow

Used to display additional space/information. Left arrows are located on the left side of a horizontal scroll bar, the down arrow is used to view to the left of the current position on the screen or window. It often looks like a triangle. See Scroll Bar.

Menu Bar

Row of words near the top of a computer screen. One letter in each word is underlined. The first two items in an application's menu bar are often <u>F</u>ile and <u>E</u>dit. Each menu bar item has a list of options associated with it. To see the list of options associated with an item, you must first select that item.

To select a menu bar item, use your mouse to click on it or press the Alt key and the letter key for the letter that is underlined in the item name. For example, to select <u>F</u>ile, use to mouse to click on the word "<u>F</u>ile" or press the Alt and F keys at the same time.

Once you select the menu bar item, its list of options is displayed. You can then select an option by clicking or pressing the keyboard letter that is underlined. If you do not want to make a selection, press the escape key or click somewhere else on the screen to close the list of options.

Menu Item

Also called menu bar item. See Menu Bar.

Monitor

What you look at when you work on your computer to see what you are doing. See Computer.

Mouse

A hand-operated device that controls the pointer (See cursor.) on the monitor. A computer mouse has at least two buttons on it. The left button is generally the most-used one. You use it to make selections. See Click, Double Click and Computer.

Mouse Buttons

Used to control certain computer activities such as selecting. See Mouse, Click, Double Click and Computer.

Open

Opening means gaining access to something—whether you want it or not. The something could be an application, a screen or a window. When this something is opened, it appears on your monitor.

Pointer

See Cursor.

Protected Field

You cannot edit information in a data box if it has been set up as a protected field.

Radio Buttons

Appear as small circles positioned in front of items in a list. Radio buttons provide a visible way to tell that an item is selected. When not selected, radio buttons are small, unfilled circles. When selected a radio button is filled in with a dot.

Radio Button (not selected)   Radio Button (selected)

Required Data Element

If the description for a data element says "This is a required data element," it means that the associated data box must contain information before the record can be saved.

Right Arrow

Used to display additional space/information. A right arrow is located on the right side of a horizontal scroll bar, and is used to view to the right of the current position on the screen or window. It often looks like a triangle. See Scroll Bar.
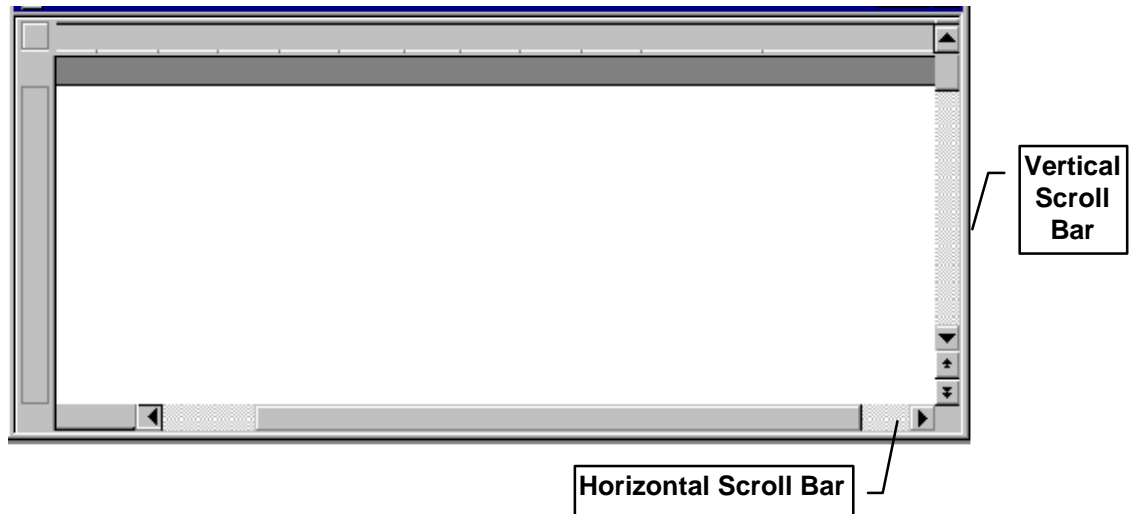
Screen

That portion of a computer application that is displayed as a unit at the same time on your computer monitor. Sometimes called a window or a page.

Scroll Bar

Allows you to see beyond what is currently displayed on your monitor. Scroll bars can be vertical (allowing you to see above or below the current display) or horizontal (allowing your to see left or right of the current display). Vertical scroll bars operate via their up and down arrows (See Up Arrow and Down Arrow), while horizontal scroll bars employ left and right arrows (See Left Arrow and Down Arrow). Also see Scrolling Text Box.

Scrolling Text Box

Box that allows you to access more space than would be possible in a window that otherwise has limited space. Scrolling boxes have scroll bars that you operate by way of scrolling arrows. (See Scroll Bar, Down Arrow, Left Arrow, Right Arrow and Up Arrow.)

Vertical Scroll Bar

Horizontal Scroll Bar

Select/Selected

Click on an item. (See Click.) You can also select many items by using your keyboard. (See Menu Bar.

Tool Bar

Row of icons (pictures) located immediately beneath the menu bar. A tool bar presents a graphical way to select options. You select an icon (option) on the tool bar by double clicking that icon. See Icon and Double Clicking.

Up Arrow

Used to display additional space/information. An up arrow is located at the top of a vertical scroll bar, the up arrow is used to view above the current position on the screen or window. It often looks like a triangle. See Scroll Bar.

Window

A cohesive unit displayed in a frame on your monitor. See Screen.